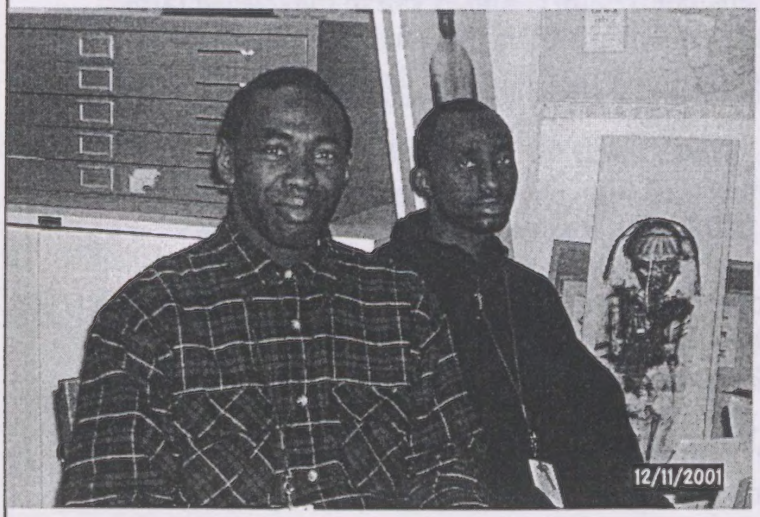
The Field Museum

Natural News

Weekly Staff Newsletter
December 14, 2001

Studying The Impact of Civil War on the Culture and the Environment in Sierra Leone, West Africa



Sigismond Ayodele Wislon left and Cyril Wilson in the African Archaeology and Ethnology Lab. Photo by Chap Kusimba

A $50,000 grant from the Norwottock Charitable Trust to Associate Curator of Anthropology **Chap M. Kusimba** and MacArthur Curator of Zoology/Mammals **Bruce D. Patterson** has enabled Messrs. **Cyril O.N. Wilson** (economic geography) and **Sigismond A.E. Wilson** (biogeography) to undertake research on the impact of the civil war on the Culture and the Environment in Sierra Leone, West Africa.

Cyril and Sigismond spent six months collecting primary and secondary data and accounts in four regions of the country including Freetown and environs, East, South and Northern Provinces. Since November 1, they have been at The Field Museum compiling and analyzing field data and beginning to write a book based on their research. The book will address such topics as deforestation and destruction of wildlife habitats, loss of biodiversity, subsistence and commercial hunting of "bushmeat," environmental and cultural impacts of diamond mining, and effects of the war on the socio-economic status of women and children of Sierra Leone.

This project is the first impact assessment study on the people and environment of Sierra Leone from the perspective of Sierra Leonian scientists.

We thank John McCarter, President and CEO, Robert Martin Vice President, Academic Affairs, Mark Alvey, Academic Affairs, William Frost, and Adele Simmons for enabling us to undertake this impact research project.

Chap Kusimba,
Anthropology

FIELD NOTES

December 14-21

Staff/Volunteer Events

Helping the Earth and its People

•DEADLINE TODAY

Yoga
- NO classes Wednesday

Aerobics Class
- Tuesday, 5 p.m., Ground Floor
- Thursday, 5 p.m. Ground Floor

Green Sheet Meeting
- Wednesday, 3 p.m. FP&O Conference Room.

Public/Campus Events

Featured Research on the Field Museum Web site:

Museums, zoos, botanic gardens must play a bigger role in conservation

- Read an essay by John McCarter and colleagues, published recently in the prestigious journal *Science.*

The Natural News is published by the Human Resources Department.

Submissions can be emailed to Mark Schmeltzer (mschmeltzer@fmnh.org) Or delivered to him via interoffice mail to the Office of Institutional Advancement.

The deadline for the next issue is WEDNESDAY, December 19.

There will be NO issue published on December 28.

Turn in time sheets one day early next week!

Due to the Christmas Day Holiday on Tuesday, December 25th, time sheets are to be turned in on Thursday December 20th. As always, we appreciate your cooperation and Happy Holidays.

Randy Scalf
Human Resources

Economic Growth & Tax Reconciliation Act of 2001 Boosts Everyone's Saving Power

EGTRRA, which was signed into law on June 7, 2001, allows you to make even larger contributions to your 403(b) Tax-Sheltered Annuity plan. Beginning January 1, 2002, you will have more opportunity to save for retirement on a tax-deferred basis. The new provisions include:

- The maximum annual pre-tax savings limits for TSAs will increase. Currently, you can contribute a maximum of $10,500. This law increases the contribution limit to $11,000 for the year 2002. The maximum will then increase by $1000 each year until the limit of $15,000 is reached in 2006.
- All employees who are 50 or older or will reach age 50 during 2002 will be eligible for "catch-up" contributions. They will be allowed to contribute an additional $1000 in 2002. Thereafter the limit increases by $1000 annually until it reaches $5000 by the year 2006.
- Lower income workers will be entitled to a tax credit for contributions to retirement savings plans. Joint filers earning less than $30,000 will be entitled to a maximum 50% credit depending upon the taxpayer's filing status and adjusted gross income.

If you would like additional information about EGTRRA, please contact the Human Resources department. There are a variety of other changes that we would be happy to review as well. To take advantage of these new provisions, please stop by the Human Resources office to fill out the appropriate paperwork. You may begin this increased saving as of January 1, 2002.

Heather Metz,
Human Resources

Thirsty?

Thanks to Suka Malone and Laura Sadler, there's now a Coke machine in the 4th floor south skylight. Come one come all.

Sophia Siskel,
Exhibitions

Praise for Volunteers

December 02/01

Dear Sir,

On Wednesday, Nov. 21/01 we visited the Field for the Cleopatra exhibit. We enjoyed it and the audio portion as well.

We had the occasion to take the tour of the West Coast Indians and Inuit. This tour was guided by **John Swanton**, a docent. My husband and I are from Ontario and my sister, her son, and husband are from Anchorage, Alaska and we want to thank John for a very insightful and knowledgeable tour. He certainly knows this subject and was also able to recommend to us other areas of the museum to visit.

John certainly is a treasure in himself and is a wonderful asset to the Field and to the city of Chicago.

We want to thank him for a wonderful experience. We can't wait for our next trip to your city and the Field. Our warmest thanks to John, Marlene & Jim Cox.

Marlene and Jim Cox
Ont., Canada

Dear Sir,

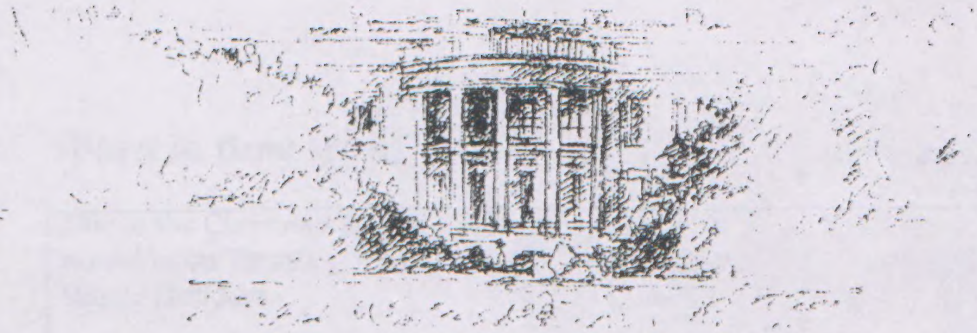
My daughters and I were anxious to see Cleopatra. We visited your exhibit on December 2. One of your volunteers, an Egyptologist, was sharing Egyptian history in the exhibit. (I was told his name is Dan.*) It was fabulous! I have never enjoyed an exhibit more. Like many others there, I was totally mesmerized. Please make sure that he gets my thanks for a great (and educational) afternoon.

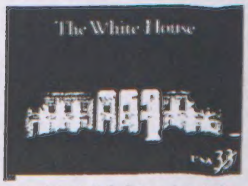
Susan Zivich
Munster, IN

**Dan Bohlmeyer is a volunteer.*

On November 30th in the a.m. my husband and I and a friend went to the Freud exhibit and a docent was there who had pages of notes he told us about Freud which greatly added to our enjoyment of the exhibit!

Sincerely,
Susan B. Rubnitz





Dec. 4, 2001

Dear Sir,

We would like to pay tribute to one of your docents, Evelyn Gottlieb. We were part of a guided tour of the exhibit on Cleopatra. Evelyn was not only knowledgeable about the subject but she presented it with such enthusiasm and self-assuredness that everyone within earshot was drawn to listen to what she was saying. Many people commented about her wealth of knowledge and her manner of presentation. The Field Museum must be proud of its dynamic programs and accomplishments and its many talented staff members.

Sincerely,

Carole Gallotta

Bella Sang

Yvonne F. Fish

Patricia M. Stahzer

NEWS FROM MUSEUM CAMPUS CHICAGO

BEARS GAME AT NOON ON SUNDAY, 12/16

Along with Sunday's Bears game, there are two high-security events at McCormick Place which will result in additional traffic congestion in the area:

1. A religious service, beginning at 9 a.m., for 12,00 guests arriving mostly via personal vehicles between 8:30 - 9 a.m., via southbound Lake Shore Drive.

2. The Microbiology conference (16,000 guests), arriving via coach buses and cabs; event begins at 9 a.m.

By 8:30 a.m., the Campus and surrounding area will be under full traffic control/congestion for the Bears game and McCormick Place events. Approximately 250 police officers will be in the area. The traffic plan is to route the McCormick Place guests to the M.L. King Drive garages and Bears game/museum traffic to the Millennium or Monroe garages and use the Soldier Field shuttles to the Campus or use public transportation. Extra electronic signs will be placed at key locations; media will also highlight public transportation and parking at Millennium/Monroe garages.

SOLDIER FIELD EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

The Chicago Police department recently outlined its crisis management plan in the event of an emergency at Soldier Field. In case Soldier Field needs to be evacuated, no personal vehicles will be allowed to exit any of the Soldier Field parking lots. McFetridge, Waldron and 18th will need to be accessible for emergency response vehicles. The police will stop traffic on Lake Shore Drive and hold it open only for emergency vehicles and access to/from Northwestern and Michael Reese hospitals. Traffic on Congress will be stopped and will be open only for emergency vehicles and access to/from Cook County Hospital. In the event that shelter is needed, the police have asked for the museums' (Adler, Field and Shedd) assistance in providing temporary shelter.

There are no current intellegence reports citing Chicago sports arenas as potential terrorist targets—however, Chicago's finest have been working on the emergency plan since 9/11.

Christina Breslow,
Museum Campus Chicago

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Grants

Last week Curator Lance Grande (Geology) received word that he has been awarded two research grants from the National Science Foundation Systematic Biology program. The project "Comparative anatomy, phylogeny and biogeography of fossil and living gonorynchid fishes (Teleostei: Ostariophysi)," written with co-PI Terry Grande, was funded in the amount of $121,403. "Comparative osteology and phylogenetic relationships of fossil and living sturgeons (Actinopterygii: Acipenseriformes)" was submitted with Co-PIs Eric Hilton and Willy Bemis, and funded $143,107. Both grants run from 2002 - 2004. These new grants are in addition to Lance's currently active NSF research grants for work on gars.

Conferences, symposia, invited lectures

Assistant Curator John Bates (Zoology/Birds), and Community Outreach Coordinator Dan Brinkmeier left last Wednesday for a two week conference on environmental outreach in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. This conference is funded by the four-year grant from the MacArthur Foundation to Bates, Brinkmeier, Assistant Curator Shannon Hackett (Birds) and Adjunct Curator Julian Kerbis (Mammals) and will be held at the Centre De Recherche en Sciences Naturelles, Lwiro, one our collaborating institutions in the region.

Assistant Curators Petra Sierwald (Zoology/Insects), and Maureen Kearney (Zoology/ Amphibians and Reptiles), were invited participants at a National Science Foundation-funded "MorphoBank" workshop on Nov. 10-11, 2001 at the AMNH in New York. The workshop entailed discussions among morphological systematists regarding the viability of creating a centralized, international database for storing morphological data for systematics research, analogous to the Genbank database which serves molecular systematists. The workshop addressed issues ranging from the practical (e.g., types of visual documentation) to the theoretical (e.g., morphological homology statements). Systematists working on a wide variety of organisms participated. Results of the workshop included a set of recommendations made to NSF and the formation of a Steering Committee to pursue the development of a prototype.

On Saturday, December 1 at the American Anthropological Association meeting in Washington DC, Alaka Wali previewed the June Finfer film, "The Hall of Man" (focused on Malvina Hoffman and The Field Museum and moderated a discussion on the film. The event was sponsored by the Council on Museum Anthropology.

Bob Martin also spoke at the AAA meeting, presenting a paper reviewing new views on primate evolution at a special symposium on "100 years of Biological Anthropology." While in D.C., Bob also toured the Smithsonian collections facility, met with four NSF program officers in biology and anthropology, and also met with the staff of Metcalf Federal Relations to discuss current developments.

Boyd Postdoctoral Fellow Raymond Codrington (CCUC) also spoke at AAA, on Friday November 30. His paper, "The Future is Unseen: The Creation of Black Identity in London," was part of an invited session entitled "2001 A Black Odyssey: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation at the Dawn of the New Millenium."

Chap Kusimba attended a conference on the "Archaeology of the African Diaspora" the weekend of Dec. 1 in Ann Arbor, and presented a paper entitled "The Role Of The Ivory And The Slave Trade In The Destruction Of African Civilizations." Chap's paper examines the rise of complex cultural and political systems of eastern and southern Africa, and the causes of their collapse. He argues against the standard account that the rise of city-states, towns, and states in the area was the result of Arab and Persian

influence through trade and migration, using new archaeological research to show that early urban landscapes of the region were formed by indigenous peoples originating from diverse ethnic groups who may have settled in the area as early as 100 BC.

Research news

Maureen Kearney traveled to Old Dominion University, the Smithsonian Institution, and the University of Connecticut in November to study amphisbaenians and to work on a variety of collaborative research projects with scientists at those institutions.

Lance Grande made study trips last month to the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and the Bell Museum in St. Paul, Minnesota. He also submitted two invited papers to a symposium volume on "Mesozoic Fishes," a follow up to the invited talk he presented in Switzerland this summer at an international conference on fossil fishes. At present Lance is sorting material he collected during two weeks of fieldwork in southwestern Wyoming this summer. His field crew included 30th Ward Alderman Mike Wojcik.

Shannon Hackett (Zoology) and Kevin Feldheim (new Pritzker Lab Manager) have been invited to Abbott Laboratories Thursday December 13. They will be giving a seminar entitled "Introduction to Basic Research in Evolutionary Biology at The Field Museum," and will be guided on a tour of Abbott's research facilities. The Field Museum and Abbott Labs have embarked on an exciting new project to produce a critical enzyme for DNA replication (PCR) for use by Pritzker Lab scientists. When successful, this project will result in more autonomy for Field Museum researchers and a considerable cost saving for users of the Pritzker Lab.

Public Education and outreach

The Center for Cultural Understanding and Change and the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society have united in displaying a quilt in the "Living Together" Exhibition. The quilt, entitled "Community Kimono: Made in Chicago," was constructed by several Japanese artists. It represents Japanese-American resettlement in Chicago after World War II, their experiences in Japanese Internment camps, and their patriotism. Through this exhibition, and others, CCUC and "Living Together" are able to reach out to Chicago communities and give them the opportunity to come talk about their diverse histories.

Publications

MacArthur Curator Jonathan Haas (Anthropology) and Winifred Creamer (Northern Illinois University Professor and Field Museum Adjunct Curator) engage in a dialogue with Daniel Sandweiss (University of Maine) and Michael Moseley (University of Florida) in the Letters section of the November 22 issue of *Science*. The discussion expands on Haas and Creamer's earlier article to address the significance of

monumental architecture and the relative role played by agriculture and marine resources in the origins of Andean civilization. This amiable exchange highlights the importance and broad relevance of future research in the area.

In its December 7 issue, Science *published* "Safeguarding the World's Natural Treasures," a "Science and Society" essay written by John McCarter, Georgie Boge, and Gillian Darlow. The article discusses the role natural history museums can and should play in environmental conservation. The full text of the article is available at: http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/294/5549/2099.

John Flynn and Research Associate Andre Wyss (UC-Santa Barbara) have an article on their Triassic-Jurassic Madagascar work scheduled to appear in *Scientific American* in February 2002. The two also have a rapid communication accepted to appear in the first Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology of 2002 on their new Altiplano fauna from the Chilean Andes.

Field work

Olivier Rieppel returned last week from China, where he was conducting fieldwork in Guizhou Province, near Guanling. Rieppel was digging for marine Triassic reptiles (about 250 million years old), in a collaborative project with the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and sponsored by National Geographic and the National Natural Science Foundation of China. Then discussions with Government officials of a fossil site protection program in the area of Xingyi, southern Guizhou province (again Triassic marine reptile sites).

Media development/press relations

Bill Kurtis' documentary on Randy Borman and the indigenous Cofan of Ecuador ("American Chief in the Amazon") is scheduled to air on A&E on December 25 at 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. (Broadcast time subject to change—ECP will provide updated information as the schedule is confirmed). A segment of the documentary was screened at The Field Museum's Women's Board luncheon earlier this year. Kurtis has also generously offered to make a Spanish translation of portions of the documentary. The Spanish version will be shown to the Ecuadorian Ministry of the Environment and other key governmental officials, NGOs, and partners when ECP's Ecuador rapid biological inventory team presents their official report and scientific findings in January. At that meeting or shortly thereafter, the Ministry is expected to sign the official decree establishing the Reserva Ecologica Cofan de Bermejo, giving official protected status to the lands where the RBI took place and placing management of the reserve directly in the hands of the Cofan.

Baker's Corner
By Paul Baker

Wednesday, the 12th of December was a turning-point day for me. I am now a house-owner in Munster, Indiana. What better way to celebrate a successful and problem-free closing than with a great, albeit late, lunch? Kerry and Jeff Sarbieski (friends and previous owners), Louise Albrecht-Mallinger (long-time friend and now-neighbor) and I decided on Chef Joel's Cooking For You in Highland, Indiana as a perfect way to end the transaction.

Chef Joel Harris had been with the Levy restaurant system for eight years before he decided to open his own place. His experiences at the Ravinia, Spiaggia, Blackhawk Lodge and Sears Tower locations, to name but a few, honed his skills and gave him an acute appreciation for fresh ingredients specially prepared.

His space on 45th is not big—I counted only 10 tables and it was fully occupied when we got there and still full when we left. The menu is skewed towards the pasta/Italian side but there are plenty of "common" items given a special twist and lots of offerings suggesting French or German origins.

The wine list is limited although a Wild Horse merlot caught my eye. They do have some specialty beers available but I bet you could bring your own wine if you wished.

Since my quest for the perfect crab cake is never-ending, I ordered the Caribbean Crab Cakes with Pineapple Salsa as an appetizer. Deep-fried and golden, they were great accompanied by the tangy, slightly spicy mound of yellow salsa.

We had a choice of cream of broccoli soup or a salad as the item that came with most meals. The soup was in a big, wide bowl, tasted fine (I sampled Louise's). My salad came "Caesar" style. Just fine. I reminded myself that this is the formula most lunchtime diners expect—order something and get a little something to partially fill up on before the huge plate of food comes out. It's the American way.

Jeff opted for the Bavarian Burger. Not too different in appearance from an average one, but this had lettuce, tomato, red onion and was served on grilled Bavarian black bread. On the side was a pile of home-made potato chips. Deeply brown, they were the kind I look for at the bottom of an average chip bag—the "burned" ones. Super.

Kerry got her favorite—the Oriental Ginger Wonton Salad. On top of a large mound of mesclun greens were thinly sliced chicken pieces covered with ginger-soy dressing and topped with crispy wontons. Quite a creation and equally daunting to finish. Meanwhile, Louise was diving into the pasta special of the day—flat pasta covered with grilled chicken, plum tomatoes and zucchini squash.

My love of shrimp and my equal love for crepes drove me to choose another one of the specials. It was called "Shrimp Crepes" so I expected a folded-over thin pancake with three or four large shrimp placed inside, looking not unlike three people sleeping on the ground at Ravinia covered with one blanket. Instead, there were three crepe packets, folded squarely on the plate, stuffed with spinach and grilled, marinated shrimp and covered with roasted red pepper and Dijon beurre blanc sauce. Out of this dang world. I could have sat there all day eating those little pockets of joy.

There were only two offerings for dessert. Collectively, all of us at the table have had enough tiramisu to pave the Piazza di Risorgimento and no one was interested in carrot cake. Everyone who has ever offered me carrot cake has heard my refusal which includes, "...there are carrots (left hand held out way left) and there is cake (right hand held out way right)".

This place is definitely worth visiting if you happen to be in Northwestern Indiana. Next time maybe there will be chocolate mousse.

Chef Joel's Cooking For You
2562 45th Street
Highland, Indiana
219-924-3160

The Field Museum

helping the earth and its people

Today is the Deadline!!

The Field Museum

Earth Share
OF ILLINOIS

united way

If you have not turned in your pledge form for this year's Annual Employee Giving Campaign today, Friday, December 14 is your last day to do so.

Thank you to all who have contributed this year; your generous donations are greatly appreciated.

If you need a pledge form or if you have any questions please call the HR Department at x7271.

Thank You!!!